

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for processing a transaction on the Internet comprising the steps of:
receiving initial user registration information, such user registration information
5 including at least one email address associated with a user;
generating a unique return email address, said unique return email address being
associated only with said transaction;
transmitting an offering email message to said user, said email message
incorporating said unique return email address as a reply to address; and
10 receiving a reply email message from said user at said unique return email address
and processing said transaction based upon information associated with said unique return email
address.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said offering email message contains content
15 specific to said transaction.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein said offering email message contains an offer to
renew a service and said transaction comprises the renewal of a service.
- 20 4. The method of claim 3 wherein said service comprises a real estate listing service.
5. The method of claim 2 wherein said offering email message includes an incentive
to reply to the offering email message within a designated time frame.

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6. The method of claim 1 wherein said transaction comprises payment of a recurring bill.

5 7. The method of claim 6 wherein said transaction comprises payment of a utility bill.

8. A method for permitting communication between a first user and a second user wherein confidentiality of identity may be preserved comprising the steps of:

10 registering a first email address associated with said first user;
receiving a message from said second user, said message being intended for said first user;
storing said message and making said message available for access by said first user;
assigning a second email address to said first user wherein said second email address is
15 used in connection only with said message, said second email address is mapped to said first email address and said mapping is stored in a database;
transmitting said message to said first user at said first email address; and
receiving a reply to said message from said first user at said second email address.

20 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the step of making said communication available at a web site for said second user to access therethrough.

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10. The method of claim 8 wherein said potential transaction comprises a purchase and sale between parties.

11. An internet based transaction system comprising:

5 registration means for receiving initial user registration information, such user registration information including at least one email address associated with a user;

address generation means for generating a unique return email address, said unique return email address being associated only with said transaction;

10 transmission means for transmitting an offering email message to said user, said email message incorporating said unique return email address as a reply to address; and

processing means for receiving a reply email message from said user at said unique return email address and processing said transaction based upon information associated with said unique return email address.

15 12. The system of claim 11 further comprising means for configuring specified times for transmitting said offering email messages.

13. The system of claim 11 further comprising means for providing an incentive to the user for replying within a specified time frame.

20 14. The system of claim 11 wherein said transactions comprise renewals of real estate listings.

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15. A transaction facilitation system which permits communication between at least two potential parties to a potential transaction wherein confidentiality of identity may be preserved comprising:

registration means for registering a first email address associated with a first user;

5 first receiving means for receiving a message from a second user, said message intended for said first user;

storing means, said storing means storing said message and making said message available for access by said first user;

10 mapping means for assigning a second email address to said first user, wherein said second email address is used in connection only with said message, said second email address is mapped to said first email address and said mapping is stored in a database;

transmission means for transmitting said message to said first user at said first email address; and

15 second receiving means for receiving a reply to said message from said first user at said second email address.

16. The system of claim 15 further comprising notification means, said notification means notifying said user that said communication is available for viewing by said user.

20 17. The system of claim 16 further comprising means for notifying said second user or said first user of the receipt of a communication by sending an email to said first user or said second user at said first email address or said second email address, respectively.

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18. The system of claim 15 further comprising means for making said communication available at a web site for said first user or said second user to access therethrough.

5 19. The system of claim 16 wherein said communications are made in connection with a potential real estate transaction.

20. The system of claim 16 wherein said communications are made in connection with an online dating service.

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